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Title: History of Malas, vol 1

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Part I: The Revival

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The brightest light can  
sometimes cast the  
darkest shadow."- Gred  
Tathiraal of the House of  
Malas, The First Age of  
Malas.

Through the Gatewater

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The vast oceans of  
Britannia seemed to  
stretch out for eternity  
from where Greyn  
perched near the top of  
the ship's mast. The seas  
around him seemed to be  
growing ever more  
turbulent with the coming  
storms. Dark clouds  
coated the sky as if the  
world was underneath an  
old, worn blanket.

Although his grip on the  
mast was strong, the  
winds were becoming  
colder, and the ship was  
starting to tilt to and  
fro as the waters  
angered. Looking down at  
the deck he could see his  
brother, Mordin, standing  
near the bow of the ship,  
gazing over a map,  
seemingly impervious to  
the nearing danger.

"Mordin! We have to turn  
back!" Greyn called down.  
Mordin continued gazing  
at his map, motionless,  
save for the dark curls  
of his hair blowing in the  
breeze. Greyn wasn't sure  
if the creaks and groans  
of the Highwater  
combined with the winds

were drowning out his voice, or if Mordin had just become distracted again.

"Mordin!!" He bellowed.

Still, Mordin did not move. "That fool wouldn't hear an angry dragon coming for him...", Greyn mumbled as he climbed down the mast and dropped to the deck of the ship. "Mordin, help me get the ship turned around. This storm doesn't look like something we want to try and...Mordin?" He stomped his way across the deck and stood in front of his shorter brother, staring down at him. His long, dark hair swirled in the wind behind him like an angry cat's tail, which suited his glare well.

"Greyn...I think we should go west. We haven't checked west, we need to check west," Mordin said without looking up from his map.

"I think you should check the sky. We need to head back." Greyn pushed the map down and finally his brother met his gaze.

"This storm will have us for supper if we don't try to get out of it now."

"We haven't looked west yet. Greyn, he could be to the west." Mordin's gaze was strong and sad.

"We haven't seen him in 2 years, Mordin." Greyn clasped his brother's shoulder. "And if we're not careful we won't ever see him."

Greyn sighed and looked away. "Maybe we should take some time away from this."

"What do you mean?"

Mordin sounded hurt.

Greyn slowly paced the

deck. "We have been  
searching for well over a  
year. I miss father as  
much as you do but...  
Mordin, we have to be  
honest with ourselves.  
He's probably not going  
to come back. It wouldn't  
have taken him so long  
to come back home."  
"He was an explorer, he  
could be anywhere."  
Mordin stared out  
towards the west.  
Greyn's shoulders slumped.  
He felt as if he had  
lived through this  
conversation hundreds of  
times. "If we're meant to  
find him and he's alive...."  
"He's alive."  
"If we're meant to find  
him, we will. We can't  
find him if we lose the  
Highwater with us in it."  
Mordin's face remained  
blank. "Help me change  
course; that storm  
doesn't look like it's going  
to go away." Mordin gazed  
back towards the west  
once more and then  
reluctantly began to help  
his brother.  
For hours they sailed  
under the dark clouds,  
trying to escape the  
embrace of the storms,  
but more and more the  
seas tossed the  
Highwater back and forth  
with foaming waves that  
made the ship groan like  
an aggravated sea  
creature. The winds grew  
so fierce that the  
brothers were forced to  
close their sails. They  
clung desperately to the  
rails of the ship as the  
water forced their eyes  
nearly shut.  
"Something is wrong!"  
Greyn yelled through the  
winds.  
"Nothing gets past you,  
does it?!" Mordin roared  
back.

"No, the Highwater!  
Something is wrong with  
the ship!" Greyn replied,  
looking around as another  
wave made the mast  
creak under the strain.  
"The ship is moving  
faster! We closed the  
sails, but we're moving  
faster--we're being  
carried by a current!"  
Through the shower of  
raindrops, Mordin's eyes  
grew wide. "Greyn! I think  
I see where the current  
is coming from!"  
Greyn looked across the  
bow of the ship and his  
face froze. In his shock,  
he pulled himself forward  
along the deck and looked  
across the waters. It was  
as if the ocean suddenly  
dropped out of the  
horizon into nothingness.  
Through the haze of the  
storm he could see a  
great chasm in the seas  
roaring like a dozen tidal  
waves. It wasn't until the  
speeding currents drew  
the Highwater ever closer  
that he knew what  
awaited them.  
He spun around and  
scrambled his way back  
to Mordin desperately.  
"Whirlpool! Hold on as  
tight as you can, it's a  
whirlpool! Mordin! Grab  
onto anything you can and  
don't let go!!"  
The ship, nothing but a  
speck in the tempest,  
rushed towards the  
whirlpool faster and  
faster. The Highwater hit  
the edge of the massive  
vortex and was jarred  
hard to its starboard  
side by the deadly  
spinning waters, nearly  
throwing the brothers  
from the deck. The ship  
shot faster and faster  
around the edge of the  
swirling ocean chasm,  
building up speed and

howling through the winds.  
Through the piercing  
rains, Mordin could see  
the edge of the whirlpool  
stretching further away  
as if the boat had fallen  
from a massive cliff. As  
the ship fell deeper,  
darkness folded in around  
it and covered the vessel,  
burying it in the black  
seas. The last thing  
Mordin heard was the  
mast snapping into  
splinters.

"I think this one's coming  
around, Fallah."

Mordin could feel warmth  
creeping back into his  
limbs and light dancing on  
the other side of his  
eyelids. He could feel the  
grit of sand on his face  
and in his hair. His robes  
were soaked. As he slowly  
broke his view of the  
world open again, he could  
see a huge barrel of a  
man leaning over him,  
smiling. A few paces  
away, Greyn was beginning  
to stand with help of a  
pretty young woman.

"What...where are we?"

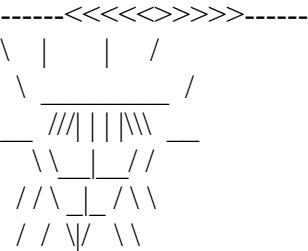
Mordin's legs buckled as  
he tried to stand. The  
stranger standing over  
him caught him by the  
shoulders and helped him  
to his feet.

"Easy lad, you're in no  
hurry," the man said with  
a deep rumble. "You're  
lucky to be in one piece  
after being on such a  
journey. We get just as  
many bodies as we do  
survivors on the shores  
of Gatewater Lake."

Greyn stumbled over to  
Mordin with the help of  
the young woman and held  
his brother's head in his  
hands. "Are you alright?  
Mordin?"

"Yes...yes, I think I am,"  
Mordin said dazed, but  
still smiling slightly at his

brother. He turned and  
looked at the stranger  
who had awoken him.  
"Where did we land? Are  
we far from Trinsic?"  
Besides the waters, he  
could see nothing but  
desert all around them.  
The man looked uneasily  
at the young woman and  
then back at Mordin.  
"Yes lad, I'm afraid  
Trinsic is very far from  
this place. My name is  
Grevel Brandsmen and  
this is my daughter,  
Fallah." He gestured to  
the woman.  
She smiled at the  
brothers and in a small  
voice said, "Welcome to  
Malas."



#Artistic Drawing of  
the Gem of Immortality#